

AL-16-000-5640

JOHNNY ISAKSON  
GEORGIA

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3625 CUMBERLAND BOULEVARD, SUITE 970  
ATLANTA, GA 30339  
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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 7, 2016

VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
CHAIRMAN

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS  
CHAIRMAN

FINANCE

HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE  
SAFETY, CHAIRMAN

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. Laura Vaught  
Associate Administrator For Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Room 3426 ARN  
Washington, D.C. 20460

RE: *Exempt*

Dear Ms. Vaught:

Please find enclosed correspondence I received from the above-referenced constituent. I would appreciate your review of this information in accordance with established policies and procedures. Upon completion of your review, please forward clarification of your findings to the address below.

In the event my office may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Gay at (770) 661-0999. Thank you for your efforts in this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Johnny Isakson  
United States Senate

Enclosure (s)  
One Overton Park, Suite 970  
3625 Cumberland Blvd  
Atlanta, GA 30339  
ATTN: Michael Gay



# JOHNNY ISAKSON

UNITED STATES SENATOR • GEORGIA



## Privacy Release Form

The Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits the government from revealing any information from personal files of individuals without the express written permission of the person involved. Disclosure of personal records to a Senator who is acting on behalf of a constituent is prohibited, unless the individual to whom the record pertains has consented.

I, the undersigned, hereby authorize the release of all pertinent information to Senator Johnny Isakson to make an inquiry on my behalf to the following Federal agency: USEPA (Region 4)

(Name of Federal Agency)

Name: exempt 6

Address: exempt 6

City, State, ZIP Code: exempt 6

Social Security # exempt 6

Other ID#: exempt 6

Telephone #: exempt 6

Signature: exempt 6

Date: 3/7/2016

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR PROBLEM BELOW:

See attached letter which was previously supplied

Please return completed form to:

One Overton Park  
3625 Cumberland Boulevard, Suite 970  
Atlanta, Georgia 30339  
or fax to: 770-661-0768  
or email to: casework@isakson.senate.gov

16000-5640

*exempt*

*exempt*

*exempt*

Email: '

Honorable Johnny Isakson, Senator  
Washington, DC 20510

February 28, 2016

**RE: Pattern of discriminatory hiring and promotion practice at USEPA, Region 4, Atlanta, GA.**

Dear Senator Isakson:

I am an Indian-American. I am a Mining, Metallurgical and Environmental Engineer with 25 years of experience. In February 2010, I came to work in coal mining area for USEPA, Region 4, in Atlanta, GA, in Water Protection Division (WPD) as GS-12. Being the only mining engineer, I was handling 402 and 404 sections as the other mining engineer lasted only 2 months or so and went back to Kentucky to work for a coal company. Since then I did many other functions as Environmental Engineer and trained others.

I discovered that I was doing the same work as GS-14s. I requested equal pay for equal for equal work. The director of WPD did not help me. WPD created new GS-14 positions to promote Caucasians irrespective of their expertise. In my last 5 years I applied for numerous positions to get promoted. Since then, every promotion was denied to me. Almost all promotions were granted in favor of Caucasians. In last 5 years I never saw that any Asian /Indian Americans were promoted to any scientific or engineering or management jobs. AND almost every single new hires were Caucasians. All these are not happening by accident!! IS IT ??

Our Regional Administrator (RA) and Dy. Regional Administrator (DRA), Office of Civil Rights and many others tried to provide equal opportunities for all employees and arranged diversity training to all managers to change the culture of racial biased hiring and promotions. But unfortunately nothing has changed; racism is alive and well practiced at EPA by the hiring managers at the expenses of the tax payers. These hiring managers have ignored the efforts of RA, DRA and others.

I am enclosing a copy of an email from *Exempt* wherein she has promoted another Caucasian. The newly promoted lady has no experience in 'toxicity' which is required for this position, I have trained her, in part, for mining permits, and she is still under training. I am an expert in 'toxicity' matters. Since I have been at EPA, *Exempt* has never hired anyone except Caucasians. She has never hired any Asian Americans.

There is a clear pattern of discriminations against the Asian/ Indian American at USEPA. I am therefore seeking your help and intervention in getting equality, equal pay for equal

work, and getting the promotion to GS-13 grade which I deserved a long time ago (if I were a Caucasian I would have been promoted a long time ago).

**Thanks!**

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Sincerely,

*exempt*

*exempt*

*exempt*

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**From:**  
**Sent:**  
**Subject:**

*exempt*  
Wednesday, February 24, 2016 8:33 AM  
Selection of GS-13 NPDES Permit Specialist

Good Afternoon Everyone:

I wanted to let you know that *exempt* was selected for the NPDES Permit Specialist GS-13 in the NPEB, pending security clearance. I am very pleased to have had such a great group of candidates to select from. This was a difficult decision because all of you had a very good and unique set of qualifications. Thank you for your interest and for taking the time to interview for the position.

*exempt*  
*exempt*

NPDES Permitting and Enforcement Branch  
Water Protection Division  
EPA Region 4

*exempt*

16-000-5640



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 4  
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER  
61 FORSYTH STREET  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

APR 4 2016

The Honorable Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator  
One Overton Park, Suite 970  
3625 Cumberland Boulevard  
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

Dear Senator Isakson:

Thank you for your March 7, 2016, letter to Ms. Laura Vaught, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's former Associate Administrator for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, regarding a letter you received from your constituent and an EPA Region 4 employee, *exempt b*. In his letter *exempt b* expresses concerns regarding what he believes is a pattern of discriminatory hiring and promotion practices in the Region. Your letter was forwarded to the Region 4 office, in Atlanta, Georgia, for response.

Since submitting his letter to you and a similar letter, dated February 27, 2016, to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, *exempt b* elected to pursue his concerns through our Office of Civil Rights' Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Complaint Process. Through this process, all known allegations of discrimination, retaliation, and/or harassment are promptly and thoroughly investigated, and where appropriate, remediating action will be taken. Because he has elected a formal Agency program, I am allowing his concerns to matriculate through before making any determination.

In Region 4, we take allegations of discrimination seriously. The EPA will not tolerate discrimination based on race; color; religion; sex; including pregnancy, sex stereotyping, gender identity or gender expression; national origin; sexual orientation; physical or mental disability; age; protected genetic information; status as a parent; marital status; political affiliation or retaliation based on previous EEO activity. Furthermore, employment decisions, including those related to hiring, training or awards must be made in accordance with the merit system principles contained in 5 U.S.C. Section 2301.

In a separate letter to *exempt b* dated March 22, 2016, we informed him that he could contact Naima Halim-Chestnut, Regional Civil Rights Officer, for additional information or to discuss the internal EEO Process. He was also informed that he could contact Barbara Schwartz, Human Resources Officer, for assistance on any other employee related matters or additional support.

If you have questions or need additional information from the EPA, please contact me or Allison Wise, in the Region 4 Office of Government Relations, at (404) 562-8327.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather McTeer Toney".

Heather McTeer Toney  
Regional Administrator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 25, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

We write to you with concerns about the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. We ask that you conduct a thorough review of water quality monitoring data from Minnesota communities and Indian Tribes since 2014 to ensure that drinking water systems in the state are in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Section 1413 of the SDWA requires public water systems and states with primary enforcement authority to monitor their water supplies to ensure compliance with federal standards. If water systems are found to be in violation during EPA review, the agency must notify the state and provide assistance to bring the system into compliance. In light of the delay between EPA action and positive test results showing lead up to 880 times the federal safety limit leaching into Flint's tap water, an agency review of water quality monitoring data from Minnesota communities and Indian Tribes is needed to identify any potential warning signs similar to those which were present in Flint.

Public health authorities make clear that exposure to even small amounts of lead can cause neurological damage in young children. We urge the EPA to work in close conjunction with other federal agencies (including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), as well as state and local governments to ensure that proper oversight measures are in place in Region V to review monitoring data from public water systems in a timely manner. This oversight and coordination is critical to prevent future crises and avoid public health and environmental disasters.

We respectfully ask for an update on the agency's plans to undertake a review to address these issues.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate



Al Franken  
United States Senate

**cc: The Honorable Mark Dayton, Governor of the State of Minnesota**  
**cc: Commissioner John Linc Stine, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency**  
**cc: Commissioner Ed Ehlinger, M.D., Minnesota Department of Health**